

Idaho Wolf Management Progress Report July 28 - August 15, 2008

Monitoring

Michael Lucid and Jim Hayden collared a wolf in a new pack in the Panhandle in Game Management Unit 1 to help locate other pack members. Lucid is attempting to locate and capture other wolves in Units 6 and 7 before returning to Unit 1.

Jason Husseman collared an wolf and verified reproduction in the same pack in a remote area of Unit 36. Carter Niemeyer has been working Units 33 and 34 attempting to collar a wolf in a new pack.

Kari Holder of the Nez Perce Tribe conducted a partial monitoring flight to assist field crews' ground efforts. Based on results of that flight, she attempted reproductive surveys for two packs in Units 10 and 12 along the border with Montana. Reproduction was confirmed in one of the packs.

Isaac Babcock of the Nez Perce Tribe also conducted a partial monitoring flight to aid his field investigations. He verified reproduction in a pack in Unit 19A. He attempted to determine the pack/reproductive status of a radio collared disperser from near Fairfield that is now residing near McCall. The wolf was still by itself. Babcock conducted a monitoring flight on August 12.

Jim Holyan of the Nez Perce Tribe attempted to locate the uncollared pack in Unit 15 for reproductive status and potential trapping, but found little wolf sign worth setting up a trap line; he did hear two or three adults howl. He then investigated another pack's traditional home sites in Unit 17, but they are not in use to date. Next Holyan briefly searched another pack's home range in Unit 17; he heard three or four adults howling on two separate occasions, but no pups were located and trapping opportunities were unavailable. He also followed up on a sighting report west of Crooked River (Elk City area), but observed no wolf sign. Holyan conducted monitoring flights on August 6 and 7.

Control

From July 28 to August 15, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services documented 24 confirmed wolf depredations and five probable wolf depredations on livestock. The federal agents confirmed that wolves killed 77 sheep, four adult cows and seven calves and injured another six sheep and determined that another 11 sheep, seven calves and a guard dog were probable wolf depredations. During the reporting period, WS killed 11 wolves and captured and released six wolves, five of which were radio -collared. During the same time frame in 2007, WS documented eight confirmed wolf depredations and one probable wolf depredation.

Nonlethal control efforts are ongoing as per the Idaho Wolf Population Management Plan in the area between Leadore and Yellowstone National Park along the Montana border. Radio collars have been placed on wolves in the area that have been implicated in depredations to further knowledge of wolf movement in the area and pursue nonlethal options prior to lethal control. Discussions of and use of nonlethal tools are ongoing with livestock producers to assist them in reducing livestock-wolf problems along this potential corridor.

Additionally, nonlethal efforts continue in a cooperative effort near Ketchum to reduce livestock-wolf conflicts. Four producers, U.S. Forest Service, U.S.D.A. Wildlife Services, Idaho Fish and Game, Blaine County Commission and Defenders of Wildlife are experimenting with the use of paid nonlethal personnel (funded by Defenders) who use fladry and penning for sheep at night, and attempt to scare wolves away from sheep during the night. Wolves have been around the sheep on a regular basis but to date only one sheep has been confirmed killed by wolves.

Research

Nothing new to report.

Information and Education

The new Idaho Fish and Game wolf Webpage now includes information on the lawsuit and injunction that caused wolves to be temporarily relisted under the Endangered Species Act. It also has updated information on the new 10(j) rule under which Idaho Fish and Game is acting as the “designated agent” for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and conducting day-to-day wolf management. What the public can and can’t do under the new rules is discussed. The page is at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>

We also would like to remind people that when wolves are in the area, please be aware that they may attack or injure dogs. It often helps to keep dogs in kennels or inside buildings at night and to not let them roam freely when humans are not around. When fresh wolf sign is found, place dogs on restraints and keep supervised. The 10(j) rule allows individuals to harass or kill a wolf attacking or molesting their livestock and stock animals including pets. If you are having concerns or problems with wolves close to your residence, please inform the Fish and Game office nearest you.

Please help us manage wolves by reporting wolf sightings on our Fish and Game observation form found at: http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/apps/wolf_report/

New: FWS – Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Status (WY, MT and ID): The U.S. Federal District Court in Missoula, Montana, issued a preliminary injunction on Friday, July 18, 2008, that immediately reinstated temporary Endangered Species Act protections for gray wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains pending final resolution of the case. This includes all of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming,

the eastern third of Washington and Oregon, and parts of north-central Utah. The USFWS is evaluating legal options regarding the court's order and the ongoing litigation over the agency's delisting of the northern Rocky Mountain wolf population. All wolves in the southern half of Montana, all portions of Idaho south of Interstate-90, and all of Wyoming will be managed under the 2005 and 2008 Endangered Species Act nonessential experimental population 10(j) regulations. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game will once again act as the designated agent for the USFWS in implementing day-to-day management of wolves under the MOU between the secretary of interior and governor of Idaho signed January 2006.

Delisting wolves and assuring their proper long-term management is and has been of highest priority for the state of Idaho and the Fish and Game Department. We continue to work along with the departments of Interior and Justice, states and interveners toward the eventual delisting of wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains, and move toward state management under the Idaho Wolf Conservation and Management Plan and the Idaho Wolf Population Management Plan. You may hear deputy attorney general Clive Strong discuss the legal situation and what the state is doing at the following link:

<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/court/>

You may review past wolf weekly publications on our wolf webpage and links along with all pertinent and updated wolf information and publications at:

<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>